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ABSTRACT

The alternatives to the traditional intermediate or second-year courses in community colleges are three student-centered plans designed for colleges with low or high enrollment of second-year Spanish students. Plan A is a two-year program of Spanish instruction. It consists of Spanish 101 and 102 and eight four-week minicourses, including two different grammar minicourses during the first four weeks of instruction. Plan B is a two-, two-and-a-half-, or three-year program. It includes Spanish 101, Spanish 102, and also eight four-week minicourses. These courses may be taken during two, three, or four semesters. Students may choose from 12 different minicourses. Plan C is an accelarated one-, one-and-a-half, or two-year program. It enables students to complete Spanish 103 and Spanish 104 in one or more semesters. They could take both courses simultaneously. Students receive credit on completion of eight four-week minicourses. Charts for each plan and a list of suggested minicourses are included. These alternatives may be offered in other languages. (Author)

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ALTERNATIVES TO THE TRADITIONAL INTERMEDIATE SPANISH COURSES IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Among the major concerns of community college foreign language departments, one often finds:

- a low enrollment of second year students because of scheduling problems or early transfering to four year institutions.
- a wide variety in students' language abilities and background.
- diversity of students' interests, motivation, and expectations.
- no special fundings or facilities for innovating foreign language programs.

Consequently, most of us who teach second languages in community colleges have to confront the difficult problems of how to offer a full two year program of language instruction to as many students as possible; how to arrange the content according to students' interest and ability; and how to provide a more flexible scheduling of classes.

In trying to solve some of these problems, I have designed three student-centered plans for the intermediate or second year courses. They are possible ways of presenting subject matter (after the fundamentals of language have been introduced in 101 and 102 courses). They may be offered instead of any traditionally

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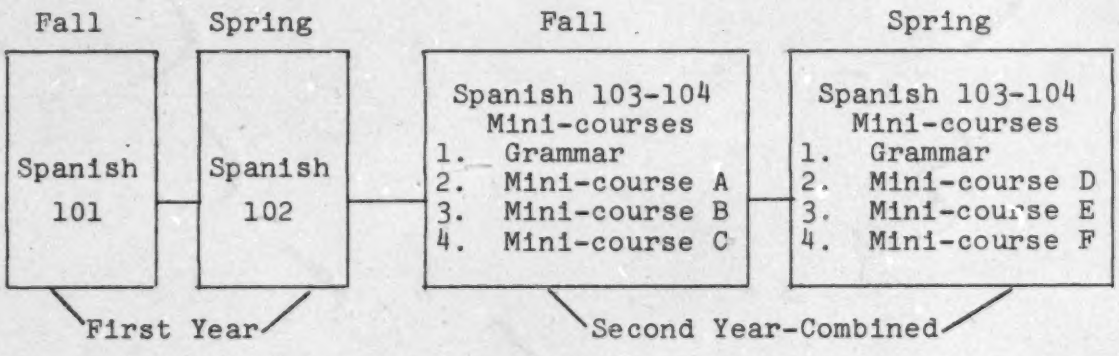
oriented program with no special facilities or additional faculty or staff.

Careful planning, ingenuity and preparation of a wide range of materials are essential to the three plans. They require a very orderly scheduling of offerings and the development of numerous mini-courses to be used for independent studies or classroom instruction. Among the suggested mini-courses applicable to any alternative plan are the following:

Advanced Conversation and Comprehension
Advanced Reading
Advanced Writing
Spanish for Travelers
Spanish Music
Spanish Art
Spanish Culinary Arts
Current Events in the Spanish Speaking World
Spanish for Nurses
Business Spanish
Spanish Folklore
Every Day Life in Spain
Every Day Life in Latin America
African Influence in the Spanish World
The History of Spain
The History of Latin America
The Life of Hispanos in the Urban Areas of the United States

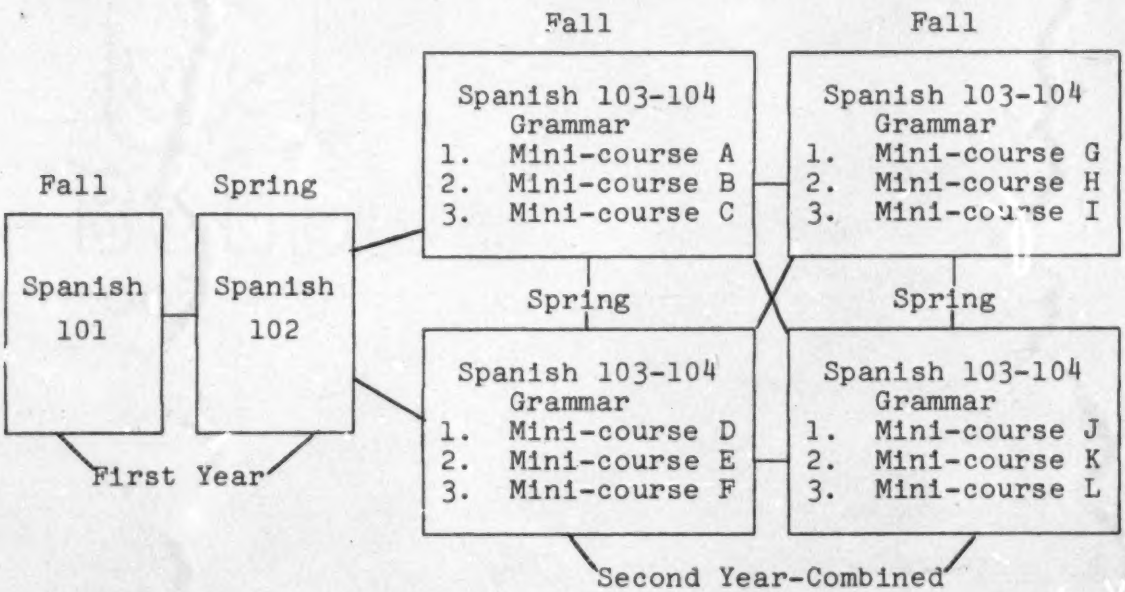
Plan A



This alternative is a two year program of Spanish instruction mainly designed for colleges with a very low enrollment of second year language students. It includes Spanish 101, Spanish 102 and combined Spanish 103 and Spanish 104 classes.

Spanish 103 and 104 consist of four four-week mini-courses every semester, considering that semesters are 16 weeks long. Two different grammar mini-courses are offered during the first four weeks of instruction, one for the Spanish 103 and one for the Spanish 104 students. During the remaining 12 weeks all students take the same three mini-courses. These may be selected according to the interest of the majority of the students.

Plan B



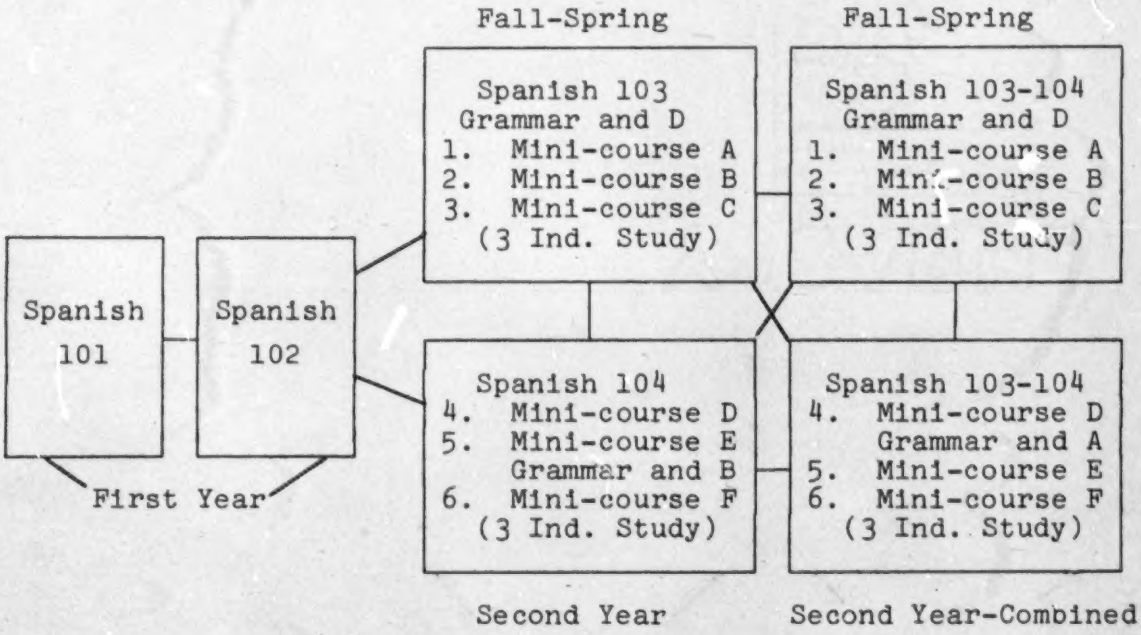
This second alternative is a two, two and a half, or three year program also designed for colleges with low enrollment of second year students, but where they tend to remain to take as many courses as possible. This plan gives students the opportunity

to choose from a wider variety of mini-courses. It consists of Spanish 101, Spanish 102 and combined Spanish 103 and Spanish 104 classes.

Students must register for 103 and 104 at the same time. They will receive credit for both courses upon completion of eight mini-courses, including two grammar mini-courses, one at the 103 level and one at the 104 level. They will be given an incomplete grade at the end of the first, second or third semester.

Twelve different mini-courses must be offered in four consecutive semesters. Students must be provided with the schedule of mini-courses at the time of registration.

Plan C



This accelerated plan is a one, one and a half or two year program designed for colleges with either low or high enrollment of second year students. It fulfills the needs of students who are

willing to take independent studies or two Spanish courses simultaneously. The flexibility of this program enables students to complete Spanish 103 and 104 in one or two semesters. It could be offered with separate or combined 103 and 104 classes.

Spanish 103 consists of four four-week mini-courses, including a grammar mini-course. Spanish 104 consists also of four four-week mini-courses. Students must register for these two classes at the same time. They will receive credit for both, 103 and 104, upon completion of two grammar mini-courses and six other mini-courses.

Mini-courses should be offered alternatively during four consecutive semesters and various independent study mini-courses should be available. Some of these mini-courses may be, for example:

Advanced Reading
Advanced Writing
Grammar Units
Creative Writing
Advanced Conversation
Other four-week special projects.

Plans B and C require individual scheduling of mini-courses at the time of registration and record keeping for credit purposes. The following form may be used:

SPANISH 103-104

SCHEDULE OF MINI-COURSES

NAME OF STUDENT: _____

SEMESTER: FALL _____ YEAR _____ SPRING _____ YEAR _____

MINI-COURSE	DATES FROM	TO	DATE OF COMPLETION	GRADE
Grammar 103				
Grammar 104				
Advanced Conversation				
Advanced Reading				
Advanced Writing				
Spanish for Travelers				
Commercial Spanish				
Spanish for Nurses				

These three plans may lead to other alternatives, according to the length and content of mini-courses offered every semester. I suggest four-week mini-courses because a minimum of three weeks is necessary to study a particular area in depth and three or four class meetings for introducing materials and testing.

These kind of programs focus on variation for accommodation to individual student needs. They can be implemented by any community college and adapted to the teaching of other languages. Their advantages are that: (a) students are able to participate in selecting the subject matter to be studied, (b) students can choose the

area in which they wish to work at a particular time and (c) students can work in groups as well as independently. The essence of these alternatives to the traditional intermediate courses is the teacher's initiative in developing mini-courses, coordinating their offerings and specifying their objectives in advance and in detail.